

# News Release



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Contact:: John Kolb  
(707)445-6547 Ext. 11

## Pair Honored for Unique Design Of Accessible Trails in Redwoods

EUREKA – The executive director of Whole Access, a San Francisco Bay Area non-profit agency, and a trail supervisor for California State Parks have received an award for their work in designing two trails in Northern California accessible to people with limited mobility, including persons in wheelchairs.

Phyllis Cangemi of Whole Access and Don Beers, trail supervisor for the North Coast Redwoods District of State Parks, were presented the 2002 Harvey Bell Award for Excellence in Trail Design by the Western Trail Builders' Association. The award was for their work in developing a system for designing accessible trails, which was used to construct the two demonstration trails in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park in Northern California.

The system was developed to help planners design accessible trails in environmentally sensitive areas, such as the pristine redwood forests of Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Such projects present special challenges as accessible trails are built or retrofitted without severely impacting the environment.

By intention, the accessible trails don't look like accessible trails. At Prairie Creek, the designers, many of whom are involved in the national determination of Americans with Disabilities Act trail specifications, created highly naturalistic trails that feel like they "just happen" to be accessible—even on steep cross slopes and with occasionally steep trail grades. As a result, the two trails are beautifully woven into their sites.

The two trails were developed as a model, but the process was intended from the start to be generic enough that it can be applied to all trails regardless of their environmental conditions and ecological setting. The development of this process is now being documented via videotape and a written manual so that it can be used as a training guide for others improving trail accessibility in trail systems worldwide.

The system was developed through a *charrette* process, which gathered experts together from various disciplines to address the challenges. The group included a partnership between Whole Access and California State Parks, together with the Humboldt Access Project Independent Living Center, U.S. BLM, and others.

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Whole Access is a nonprofit organization based in Redwood City, California. It is an accessibility education organization that works to ensure that parks and other open spaces are accessible to everyone. For more information and project updates, visit the Trail Design Charette website at [www.wholeaccess.org/charrette/](http://www.wholeaccess.org/charrette/) and/or <http://www.wholeaccess.org>

The North Coast Redwoods District of State Parks is headquartered in Eureka, and manages 23 park units in Humboldt, Del Norte and northern Mendocino counties.

The Bell award was presented at the WTBA's award banquet held last month in Reno.

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